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January 15, 1981

STUDENT CONFERENCE SEEKS BROAD MISSION STUDY

NEW YORK -- A National Ecumenical Student Conference may be the impetus for emergence of a U.S. student Christian movement, if planners' hopes are met.

The conference will meet in Berkeley, Calif., Aug. 21-25 at the conclusion of the General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation. A committee -- composed of representatives of student movements, campus organizations and national Church offices -- met in New York recently to begin the planning.

The Rev. James McNamee, youth and college ministries coordinator at the Episcopal Church Center, is a member of the committee and the Office of Higher Education Ministries has provided a planning grant for the gathering.

After the first planning meeting, a committee spokesman laid out some of the goals of the effort: "This ecumenical challenge provides a unique opportunity to extend within the U.S. a global understanding of mission. Students will have a new context in which to respond to the many imperatives of mission and ministry which come from Student Christian Movements in other countries. The National Ecumenical Student Conference will also provide new possibilities for students to shape a witness to the faith in the midst of concerns for justice and liberation in the U.S."

The theme of the conference will be: "Come, Let Us Rise Up and Build Together" (Nehemiah, Chapter 2): "Christian Witness in the Struggles for Liberation and Solidarity in the 1980's." The aim of the conference is to be inclusive so that delegates from student movements may work in an environment which is intentionally supportive of racial, ethnic, and gender concerns for justice as central expressions of Christian faith.

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Throughout the geographical regions of the U.S. students will play major roles in the planning and mobilization for the conference. Denominational and ecumenical campus ministries, issue-oriented task groups of the churches, and related movements will all be tapped by the students in their efforts to build an inclusive conference and ecumenical student Christian movement. Many congregations have already given their support to these efforts.

Further information and application forms can be obtained from the National Ecumenical Student Conference/464 19th Street / Oakland, CA 94612.

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